

ROTHBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.
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Report of Medical Officer of Health for the
Year 1943.

Mr. Chairman, Miss Stephenson and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my fifth war-time Annual Report in the prescribed abbreviated form.

BIRTHS registered:- Male 38, Female 42, Total 80 (compared with 72 in 1942). The rate per 1000 was 13.1 and eleven were illegitimate.

DEATHS registered: Male 36, Female 47 Total 83 (compared with 76 in 1942) (giving a rate of 13.5 per 1000).

There were 4 deaths of infants under one year of age.

The chief causes of death were Heart disease 24, cancer 12, Apoplexy (or cerebral haemorrhage) 12 nephritis 10 and Violence 6.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES: The total of notifiable diseases was 124 compared with 150 in 1942. They were classified as follows:-

Measles 87, Whooping Cough 17, Pneumonia 11, Scarlet fever 5 and Erysipelas 4.

The cases of measles were a continuation of the epidemic of the previous year when 130 cases were notified, Longframlington and Thropton school areas being the chief centres - only one case being reported in Rothbury itself. This is explained by the fact that a large number of the children at Rothbury were rendered immune by the epidemic of 1940 when there were some 70 cases in the old Urban Area. It is satisfactory to note that no death was due to measles or whooping cough and particularly satisfactory to notice the absence of any cases of diphtheria.

TUBERCULOSIS: Six cases were notified during the year - two relating to the lungs and four to other forms and two of the latter were fatal. This compares with five cases notified in 1942, four being pulmonary. Only once before (in 1925) have lung cases been so few and certainly war time conditions have not increased the disease in this district.

VENEREAL DISEASE I can only repeat with satisfaction the opinion I have already expressed that this scourge is exceedingly rare in the district.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA: Approximately 94% of children under 5 years of age and 90% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 years have been immunised and I think the preventative effects have already been proved.

The general standard of cleanliness and habits were quite satisfactory and no measures were necessary to combat infestation by head lice.

SCABIES: There were still some cases in the district, but so far as I could ascertain, a diminished number.

WATER SUPPLY: I am indebted to Mr. Clarkson for the following brief report:

"The water supply throughout the area were wonderfully "good and in spite of the many heavy demands made upon our "laid-on supplies by the Military stationed in the area, with "few exceptions it has been sufficient and continuous. At "Widhitcham, since the fixing of small pumping plant there, "both the village and the P.O.W. camp had ample supplies of "water. At Thropton only on odd occasions was shortage "noticeable, and this on inspection, was caused by wastage "by taps left running, and also the washing of military "vehicles. At Longframlington there were complaints of "shortage at odd times, relating to the higher part of "the village and here again the shortage was caused by "people leaving taps running together with the washing of "military vehicles. At Rothbury the supply was excellent "and ample and we have been able to accomodate adjoining "camps (not in our district) with ample water".

BUS SHELTERS At the end of the year I revived the subject of the provision of shelters in the interests of health and comfort of bus travellers. Other district councils in the County readily supported the suggestion and I trust that before next winter steps will be taken by the Bus companies to provide shelters where considered necessary.

Despite the sunless summer of 1943 and the mental worry and physical strain of four years of war the general health of the community was quite satisfactory.

Indeed for reasons which I suggested in my last annual report many people had actually improved in health.

The question arises "will these people when rationing and restrictions are removed, return to their old pre-war habits of overeating, over-drinking and under working?

I think the answer to that question is "yes, they will.

(sgd) A. S. HEDLEY.